

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough consideration provided the present application. Claims 1-5 and 7-13 are now present in the application. Claims 1 and 7 have been amended. Claims 13 and 14 have been added. Claims 1 and 7 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Drawings

The Examiner did not indicate whether or not the formal drawings have been accepted. Since no objection has been received, Applicants assume that the drawings are acceptable and that no further action is necessary. Confirmation thereof in the next Office Action is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-5 and 7-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sumihiro, JP 10103827, in view of Sonoda, JP 09243237. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

In light of the foregoing amendments to claims 1 and 7, Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection has been obviated and/or rendered moot. While not conceding to the Examiner's rejection, but merely to expedite prosecution, as the Examiner will note, independent claims 1 and 7 have been amended to recite a combination of elements including "an opening

provided in the cover, the opening being located adjacent to the valve and exposing the valve, the valve being connectable to a water line passing through the cover at a location adjacent to the opening". Support for the above combination of elements can be found in FIGs. 3 and 4 of the instant application as originally filed. Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of elements as set forth in amended independent claims 1 and 7 is not disclosed or suggested by references relied on by the Examiner.

Sumihiro discloses that a valve 42 is connected to a pipe 44 via a connector 50 for supplying water to the refrigerator 10 (see English Abstract; FIG. 1). In other words, the water passes through the cover 22a via the pipe 44 and the connector 50 into the valve 42.

The Examiner has acknowledged that Sumihiro fails to disclose an opening and a protection cap detachably fastened to the opening. However, the Examiner relied on Sonoda's teaching of an opening 3 and a cap 5 to cure the deficiencies of Sumihiro. Even if the references were combinable, assuming *arguendo*, the combination of Sumihiro and Sonoda merely discloses putting Sonoda's cap 5 to cover the opening exposing Sumihiro's valve 42, through which the water passes. However, neither Sumihiro nor Sonoda discloses that the valve is connectable to a water line passing through the cover at a location adjacent to the opening covered by the cap. In particular, neither Sumihiro nor Sonoda discloses that the water will pass through the cover at any location of the cover other than the opening covered by the cap. Accordingly, the combination of Sumihiro and Sonoda fails to teach "an opening provided in the cover, the opening being located adjacent to the valve and exposing the valve, the valve being connectable to a water line passing through the cover at a location adjacent to the opening" as recited in amended claims 1 and 7.

Accordingly, neither Sumihiro nor Sonoda individually or in combination teach or suggest the limitations of amended independent claims 1 and 7. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that amended independent claims 1 and 7 clearly define over the teachings of Sumihiro and Sonoda.

In addition, claims 2-5 and 8-11 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claims 1 and 7, and are therefore allowable based on their respective dependence from independent claims 1 and 7, which are believed to be allowable.

In view of the above remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-5 and 7-11 clearly define the present invention over the references relied on by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are respectfully requested.

Additional Claims

Additional claims 13 and 14 have been added for the Examiner's consideration. Support for claims 13 and 14 can be found in FIGs. 3 and 4 of the instant application as originally filed.

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 13 and 14 are allowable due to their respective dependence on independent claims 1 and 7, as well as due to the additional recitations included in these claims.

Favorable consideration and allowance of additional claims 13 and 14 are respectfully requested.

Additional Cited References

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but rather to merely show the state of the art, no further comments are necessary with respect thereto.

CONCLUSION

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

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Amendment dated January 11, 2006
Reply to Office Action of September 27, 2005

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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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